



FEMA

Small But Determined Village of Rarden, Ohio

Rarden, OH - Rarden, population 176, is a classic "wide spot in the road" rural village that straddles an eight-block stretch of State Route 73 in western Scioto County, about 25 miles north of the Ohio River. Other than its proudly up-to-date volunteer fire station, the village's only distinguishing feature used to be its picturesque location in a natural hollow at the convergence of Rarden Creek and Jessie's Run. Now there's also a creek-front village park.

In March 1997, when two days of non-stop downpours and runoff from surrounding hills turned both local streams into raging rivers, many of Rarden's 60-some households suffered basement flooding or worse. Road closures shut off the village from outside help for two days and loss of water and electric service made life miserable for most residents. But the danger and loss to Copas and her neighbors in a low-lying residential area near the creeks was infinitely worse. They awoke early on the second morning of storms barely in time to escape from a rapidly expanding "lake" of floodwater erupting from the creek bed. By the afternoon of March 2, the water had reached a depth of 10 feet - submerging every structure within 200 yards of the creek beds nearly to the level of first floor ceilings.

Village Mayor Anna Gardner, who was flooded out of her own home and lived for weeks in a second-story room above a garage, worked closely with county and local safety officials over the next several days to help re-open roads, get rescue and recovery aid to those who needed it and provide daily meals for the whole community at the fire house until utility service was restored.

Volunteers, including the Red Cross and a Boy Scout troop from Granville, Ohio, arrived within days of the flood to bring food and drinking water and help with clean up and debris removal. Most village residents who suffered damage, including Gardner, eventually were able to repair and restore their homes to livability with help from FEMA emergency grants and/or loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration. But post-disaster assessments found that certain homes in the creek-front neighborhood were beyond repair.

In late March Gardner received a phone call from the Scioto County Emergency Management Agency, inviting representatives from Rarden to attend a county-wide meeting with FEMA and OEMA staff to help local officials learn about mitigation and the HMGP grant process.

"We knew what a desperate situation the flooded-out families were in, and we also knew we had a chance for the village to avoid future rescue and recovery operations and save thousands of tax dollars that would be wasted to repair or rebuild houses on that land," Gardner said. "We decided on the spot that we'd do everything possible to get a grant. In fact, we sat down and completed a pre-application form right there before we left the meeting."

An HMGP grant of \$158,000 and state/local funding totaling \$71,000 were approved for the acquisition of four homes, one mobile home and one vacant lot in the flood-prone creek front area.



Scioto County,
Ohio



Quick Facts

Sector:

Private

Cost:

\$229,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)